

# Team Resilience

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- What is **team resilience**?
  - What **types of stressors** do teams face that requires them to be resilient?
  - What does a resilient team **look like**?
  - How is team resilience **achieved**?
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## A. What Is Team Resilience?

**Team resilience** is the **collective ability** of a team to **withstand and overcome stressors** in a manner that enables **sustained performance**; it helps teams **handle and bounce back from challenges** which can endanger their cohesiveness and performance.

## B. What Types of Stressors Do Teams Face?

Being resilient helps teams that **deal with stressors**:

Some Common Team Stressors		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficult assignments</li><li>• Time pressures</li><li>• Insufficient resources</li><li>• Conflict with people outside the team</li><li>• High consequence work (e.g., safety, critical planning)</li><li>• Challenging conditions (e.g., noise, lighting, proximity to others)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hazardous work</li><li>• Angry/upset customers</li><li>• Interpersonal conflicts within team</li><li>• Lack of control</li><li>• “Missing” team members (e.g., vacation, ill)</li><li>• Inadequate work output by one or more team members</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Crisis” events</li><li>• Constant pressure, even if low-level (e.g., work is never complete)</li><li>• Changes in team membership</li><li>• Unclear team roles</li><li>• Ambiguity of direction/goals</li><li>• Multiple simultaneous smaller challenges</li></ul>

Stressors can be **chronic** or **acute** in nature. Both types can influence team effectiveness if the team is not resilient.

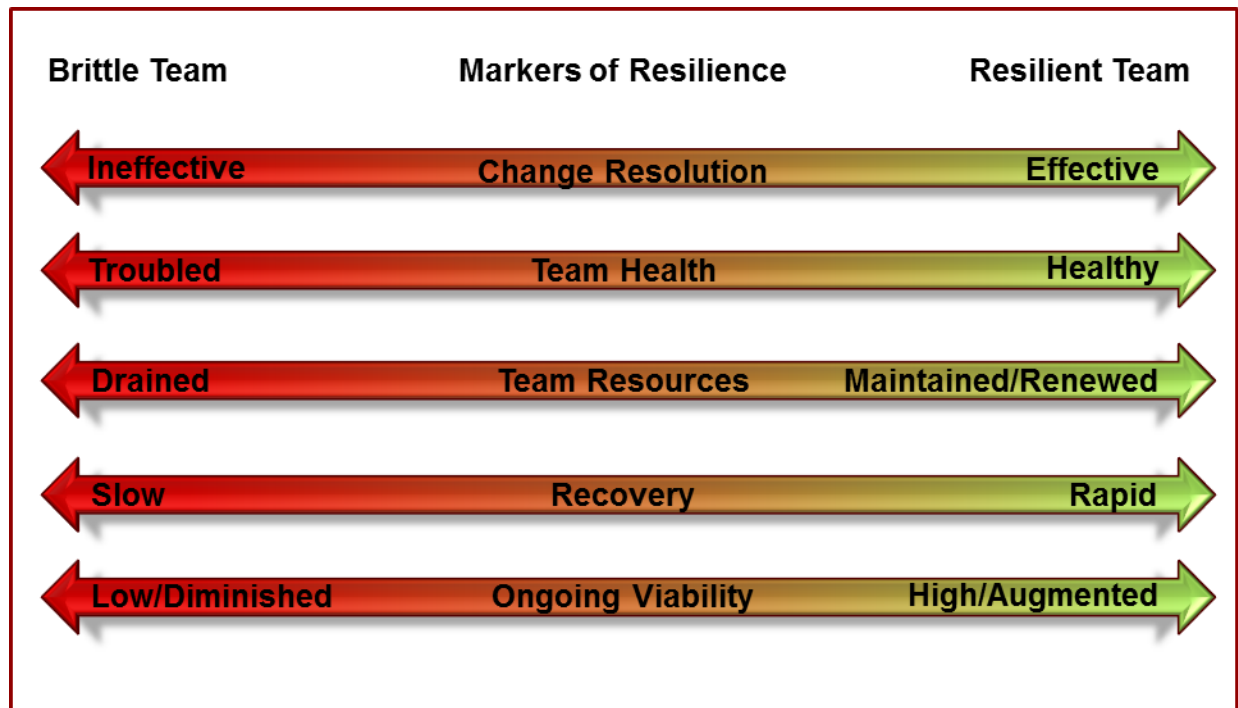
Type	Description	Examples
Chronic stressors	Are often on-going or longer lasting; can “accumulate” and may be damaging even if not too intense	Noisy work environment; ambiguous team roles; a lingering personality clash
Acute stressors	Are typically more sudden or rapid; can be short-lived but may be intense	An failed project; a crisis event

Most teams need to be resilient at times. Teams performing critical tasks, for example where the safety or health of team members or customers may be at stake (e.g., medical, police), clearly need to be resilient. But *any* work team that faces on-going chronic stressors or periodic intense acute stressors must be resilient as well.

### C. What Does a Resilient Team Look Like?

A resilient team resolves challenges effectively and in a manner that maintains their team's health and resources. They tend to recover from challenges well, returning to "normal" more rapidly and sometimes even improving their on-going viability by gaining wisdom from their experiences.

Resilience isn't an "on or off" state. After experiencing a challenge, a team can be thought of as falling on a continuum from brittle to highly resilient on five dimensions. These five "markers" or indicators of team resilience are shown below:



Thus, in the face of a stressor, teams that are highly resilient resolve challenges as effectively as possible, maintain their team health and resources, recover quickly, and show on-ongoing viability or the ability to handle future challenges as a team.

Alternatively, you can probably recall a situation where a team resolved a challenge effectively but did so in a way that *adversely* affected the team's health or drained their resources. Being highly resilient is more than simply getting through a challenge – it is about long-term effectiveness.

### D. How Is Team Resilience Achieved?

Team resilience is made possible through three strategies for dealing with stressors: a) minimize, b) manage, and c) mend. Below is a description of each of these three team resilience strategies, along with the types of behaviors resilient teams demonstrate to deal with challenges.

**Minimize:** Actions taken before a problem **or at its earliest onset**. Minimizing involves anticipating and planning for challenges, avoiding some and reducing the impact of unavoidable ones. Thus, resilient teams:

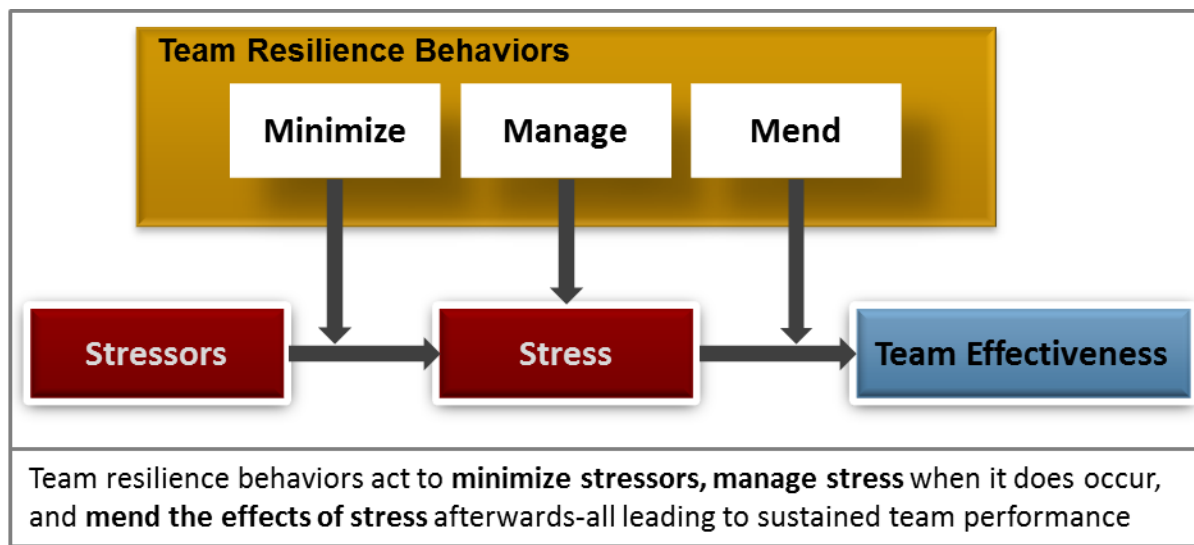
- Anticipate challenges and plan contingencies
- Understand current readiness
- Identify early warning signs
- Prepare to handle stressors

**Manage:** Actions taken **during** a challenge. Managing involves working through and handling stress so problems are resolved in as effective and healthy a way as possible. Resilient teams:

- Assess challenges quickly and accurately
- Address chronic stressors
- Provide backup and assistance
- Maintain processes under stress
- Seek guidance

**Mend:** Actions taken **after** a stressful event. Mending involves recovering from stress, learning from experience, and adapting as necessary. Resilient teams:

- Regain situation awareness
- Conduct team debriefs
- Address concerns or risk points
- Express appreciation



Source: Adapted from gOEbase - [www.gOEbase.com](http://www.gOEbase.com)  
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